

magnolias are comparatively tolerant of this abuse. Sometimes, perhaps, readers of this paper receive the impression that only magnolias grow here. There are in fact over 10,000 different 'names' in this garden, including a large collection of rhododendrons, and an extensive collection of hybrid hibiscus from Florida, as well as tree peonies, ferns and other delights. It is evident that rhododendrons, which can be pruned back hard with impunity and will break freely, will not tolerate bark-stripping to anything like the extent magnolias will. All over the garden are rhododendron growths standing erect and apparently undamaged, but dead. The explanation is clear enough when one looks at the bark. Hibiscus are also intolerant of abuse, and will not grow on a branch from which 50 percent of the wood has been stripped by another branch being torn off. A magnolia branch in this condition, though mechanically weak and probably demanding support for a couple of years, will survive and grow away cheerfully.

Sometimes when asked advice about growing magnolias, I have told my correspondent that the simplest thing would be to come to live in Canton Ticino at the southern foot of the Alps, where there is an almost perfect climate for growing these wonderful trees. I think—I hope—that I have always included that word 'almost.' Well, my Grandmother Berry would certainly have said to me on 26th July 1984, if she had still been with us, "My dear boy, these things are sent to try us." If that be so, I can only add that they are brilliantly conceived and designed for their purpose. The insurance company will pay for the greenhouse but, they tell me, they cannot give me back two lost years.

Joseph A. Witt Dies

The death of Joseph A. Witt, professor of urban horticulture at the University of Washington and curator of plant collections at the University of

Washington Arboretum, was reported on May 7. He and his wife were hosts at the Society's meeting at Seattle four years ago and he was a member of the AMS board of directors.

He was at the arboretum for over three decades and was an expert on the flora of the Pacific Northwest. He has served as president of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta and he was a member of the International Society of Arboriculture, the Rock Garden Society of America and several other organizations, and was author of articles in various horticultural journals.

Survivors include his wife Jean; daughters, Emily Cozy, Nancy Wunn and Martha Sleeper; two grandchildren; and a brother, Robert.

Magnolia Splendens

by R.B. Figlar

In 1982 I reported in the Journal on my encountering *Magnolia splendens* in its natural habitat in eastern Puerto Rico. Again in the fall/winter 1983 Journal I related a similar experience with the closely related *M. portoricensis* which occurs in the central and western part of the island — separate from *M. splendens*.

Though both of these plant hunting expeditions were rewarding experiences (we even obtained viable seeds of both species), neither species was in active bloom at the time of the observations. Thus, both articles leave many questions unanswered concerning the inflorescence of the Puerto Rico Magnolias. How large are the flowers? Is the fragrance similar to its close relative *M. grandiflora*?

Fortunately, earlier this year I was able to briefly get back to Puerto Rico and look up *M. splendens* once again and this time it was in flower.

The tree that was in bloom was the same as the one referred to at location No. 3 in my earlier article on *M. splendens*. I chose this location because it was close to the road and the tree's